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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [ETRD](#) [PTER](#) [IN](#) [AF](#) [UK](#)
SUBJECT: (C) UK-INDIA SUMMIT: BUILDING ON THE STRATEGIC
PARTNERSHIP

Classified By: PolMinCouns Maura Connelly; reason 1.4 (b, d)

11. (S/NF) SUMMARY: Prime Ministers Blair and Singh met in London October 10 for the third annual UK-India summit since the bilateral strategic partnership was launched in 2004. This was not intended as a summit of breakthrough agreements, but rather of building on the multi-faceted relationship. The leaders agreed their governments would take more practical steps together on counter-terrorism, clean coal technology, and managing diversity to combat Muslim radicalization. Singh said he had "credible evidence" of Pakistani involvement in the Mumbai terror attack, but did not give details. The visit had a strong trade and investment focus (the UK and India are each other's third largest foreign investor). In response to Singh's request, the UK is likely to send a junior minister to the November 18-19 Regional Economic Conference on Afghanistan. In another sign of the growing importance of the bilateral relationship, UK Foreign Secretary Beckett plans to spend a week in India in early November. END SUMMARY.

(U) A BUSY DAY

12. (C) James Paver, Head of FCO's India Section, gave Poloff a readout October 11 of the previous day's third annual UK-India summit since the bilateral strategic partnership was launched in 2004. He said the day had been very busy and the atmospherics very good throughout. It was clear that the two Prime Ministers held each other in high esteem. The program included a tete-a-tete at Number 10 Downing Street that ran over by half an hour; a ministerial plenary; a working lunch; a business meeting with about 10 senior CEOs from each side to discuss opportunities and barriers to bilateral investment; and a joint appearance at the closing session of a day-long bilateral "investment summit" (the UK and India are each other's third largest foreign investor). PM Singh also met separately with Chancellor Gordon Brown (Paver had no readout yet from that meeting) and with Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett. On October 11, Singh was due to receive an honorary doctorate from Cambridge University (giving him both a first degree and an honorary doctorate from each of Oxford and Cambridge). Participants in the ministerial plenary were:

- UK: PM Blair, Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett, Trade and Industry Secretary Alistair Darling, and Environment

Secretary David Miliband.

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- India: PM Singh, Trade Minister Kamil Nath and Minister of State for External Affairs Anand Sharma.

(C) AGREEING TO MORE COOPERATION

13. (C) This summit was intended to build on the existing range of ties rather than to produce splashy new agreements, Paver said. The ministerial plenary reviewed an impressive range of topics reflecting the multi-faceted relationship - including health care, labor and employment, and migration. Notable outcomes included agreement that the two governments would do more to cooperate in practical ways against terrorism, including exchanging lessons learned and consulting on how to ensure protection of upcoming major sporting events (Commonwealth Games 2010 in India, Summer Olympics 2012 in London). The Indian delegation was keen to discuss the protection of vital installations, including nuclear facilities. Twice, PM Singh over-ruled objections from his officials and agreed to cooperate with the UK:

- To build a model power plant using clean coal technology, with funding support from both the UK and the EU. GOI officials had objected that the technology is still immature and untested, therefore unsafe. Another complication, Paver explained, is that India's domestic coal supply is of poor quality; the whole point is to try to develop technological solutions so that even that dirty coal can be used in an environmentally clean way.

- To exchange experiences in managing diversity, with a focus on combating radicalization of the two countries' Muslim minorities. Singh expressed concern about growing

radicalization even outside India's immediate region, notably in Malaysia.

(U) PAKISTAN

14. (S/NF) The two leaders had a long exchange on Indo-Pakistani relations. Singh stressed that he is ahead of domestic public opinion and cannot bring his people along if there continue to be incidents like the Mumbai terror attack. He told Beckett that he has "credible evidence" of Pakistani involvement in that attack, but did not provide details. He wanted the U.S. and UK to put pressure on Pakistan and monitor its activities especially along the Kashmir Line of Control. He also worried about Nepal and Bangladesh being used as terrorist infiltration routes into India.

(U) AFGHANISTAN

15. (C) Singh asked Blair to send a minister to the Regional Economic Conference on Afghanistan, to be held in New Delhi on November 18-19. Paver said HMG is likely to send a junior minister (i.e., sub-Cabinet level).

(U) THE NUCLEAR FILE

16. (C) The timing of the summit meant that inevitably, North Korea's reported nuclear test was a topic of discussion; it also featured prominently in the two leaders' joint press conference. The Indians were concerned that the North Korean issue could affect perceptions in the U.S. Congress and complicate passage of the necessary legislation on the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Initiative. They asked for HMG's continued help with the Nuclear Suppliers Group. The British replied that India needs to show progress on concluding IAEA safeguards. PM Singh claimed progress is being made in that regard.

(U) MORE VISITS IN THE OFFING

¶17. (C) In Beckett's meeting with Singh, she discussed her planned trip to India. She wants to spend a week there in early November, taking as her theme the "globalization of responsibility." Singh liked the idea, commenting that there are effective mechanisms to manage the global economy, but no comparable global mechanisms for political management. Paver said that the Foreign Secretary's visit is still in the early planning stages; he assumed she would go to New Delhi and Mumbai, and guessed her third destination would be Hyderabad, because it is both the headquarters of the influential Deobandi Islamic movement and a technological center. In addition to Beckett's long visit, several other Cabinet and sub-Cabinet level ministers from the UK are due to travel to India in the next couple of months, with a similar number of Indian ministers coming here.

(U) COMMENT

¶18. (C) Beckett's plan to spend a whole week in India is yet another indication of the UK's conviction that the time is right to embrace the world's largest democracy and build a long-term strategic partnership with India. It is no coincidence that David Cameron chose India as the destination for one of his first overseas trips since becoming leader of the opposition Conservative Party.

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